

Collective Spirit Free School

Butterworth Lane, Chadderton, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL9 8DX

Inspection dates

11–12 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The school's ability to improve has been hindered by instability in leadership at all levels, including within the governing body.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is inaccurate.
- Leaders do not evaluate the impact of their work sharply; this undermines their capacity to act quickly when problems arise.
- Many senior and middle leaders are new to their roles and have not had enough training to have a positive impact on the school's improvement.
- Lines of accountability are unclear and decisions are not timely or informed by the views of staff or parents. Governors have not had accurate information to challenge leaders at all levels of the multi-academy trust (MAT).
- Too many lessons are taught by temporary teachers, especially in science. Pupils and parents are concerned about the impact this has on pupils' learning.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. The absence of a robust system to assess pupils' progress accurately results in teachers' low expectations of pupils. Pupils are not well prepared for the demands of key stage 4.
- Leaders do not routinely check whether staff training leads to better teaching and progress for pupils. They do not secure regular opportunities for staff to observe good and outstanding practice.
- Some teachers do not insist that pupils complete their work or present it neatly and accurately.
- Teachers do not routinely use the school's behaviour policy fairly and consistently.
- Where teaching is weak, pupils often lose interest and low-level disruption occurs.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate because pupils do not feel safe in school from bullying and fighting.
- Pupils' rates of absence and exclusion are too high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs or disability.
- The curriculum is too narrow to meet the needs and aspirations of all pupils.
- Information on the impact of pupil premium and catch-up funding is unclear.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have a firm commitment to improving the life chances of disadvantaged young people.
- The new associate headteacher has quickly identified the challenges facing the school and has acted decisively to start to tackle them.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that outcomes for pupils improve swiftly by:
 - checking more rigorously on the quality of teaching and the accuracy of assessments, in order to set pupils ambitious, realistic targets that they understand and can work towards
 - ensuring that middle leaders are appropriately trained and supported to hold their teams to account for pupils' progress, through accurate use of assessment information
 - making better use of the good teaching that exists within the school to support improvement
 - seeking out and learning from good practice in successful schools
 - insisting on high standards in pupils' presentation of their written work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that sharper checking on all aspects of the school's work leads to more accurate self-evaluation and incisive short- and long-term planning that rapidly improves the school
 - precisely defining the roles and remits of leaders at all levels of the multi-academy trust
 - ensuring that leaders and governors at all levels have the necessary knowledge to challenge each other efficiently and successfully and fulfil their role in tracking the impact of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and well-being by:
 - urgently increasing levels of attendance and reducing exclusion rates, especially of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability
 - ensuring that the school's behaviour policy is consistently and fairly applied and that learning is rarely disrupted
 - making a review of arrangements to keep pupils safe and happy in school an urgent priority
 - providing a broad and balanced curriculum that captures pupils' interest and meets their learning needs and aspirations effectively.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics enables pupils to make good progress from their relative starting points and speed up their rates of progress in science
 - providing a broad and balanced curriculum that captures pupils' interest and meets their learning needs and aspirations effectively.

An external review of governance, including the school's use of the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium grant should be undertaken, in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders at all levels of the MAT share an undoubted commitment to improving the life chances of the young people in their community. They have not, however, shown the capacity to apply their vision successfully to the practicalities of leading and managing a complex secondary school. Leaders react to crises rather than pre-empting them, because of weak improvement planning and the absence of regular checking and review of the school's work.
- Leaders have not been equal to the task of maintaining the senior leadership of the school since the substantive principal's sick leave began in January 2016. Consequently, the staff was left rudderless for the following four months. A new, experienced associate headteacher was only very recently appointed to support the school for four days per week. An interim chair of the governing body is in place, following the recent resignation of the elected chair.
- The associate headteacher has been quick to assess the main issues relating to the quality of teaching and standard of behaviour. He has taken swift action to improve things and has begun to win back the confidence of some, if not all, parents. He knows what is needed to improve the school, but there is a long way to go before the school provides an adequate quality of education for all its pupils.
- There is no history within the school of strong systems to check the quality of teaching. The roles and responsibilities of middle leaders have not been defined clearly enough in the past and this has led to variability across departments. Most leaders are enthusiastic but many are new to their roles. They have too many competing responsibilities and too few training opportunities have been provided for them to develop their skills.
- Middle leaders also lack the time to meet as a group to share good practice in leadership and management of their subjects and ensure consistency of policy. The outcome of this is that departments are behaving quite independently of one another. Pupils are aware of this and report that there are different approaches to teaching, homework, marking and behaviour across the school. This is also because the school uses a succession of temporary teachers, notably in science. All of this turbulence does not present a stable environment for learning.
- New systems recently put in place by the new associate headteacher are adequate. However, a legacy of imprecise target setting still affects the quality of teaching at the school. The new associate headteacher is gradually creating a culture of less formal observations of teaching and knows teachers' strengths and areas for development well. There is not a focused training programme based on whole-school and individual priorities for the improvement of teaching.
- The school has had no special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), until a recent arrangement to employ a SENCo from the Manchester Creative Studio School, a sister school within the MAT, for three days per week. He has begun working with the vice-principal to identify the needs of those registered as having special educational needs or disability.
- There is no dedicated space or 'place of safety' for vulnerable pupils who find it difficult to settle in lessons. This contributes to the high proportion of exclusions.
- The school's curriculum does not meet pupils' needs. In particular, pupils do not have enough opportunities to engage in investigative science. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are taught in the morning and non-core subjects in the afternoon. The day is then extended to provide either enrichment activities or extra support. The school invests heavily in the extended day, employing external staff to run the compulsory activities on Fridays. Pupils are not enthused by these. Those who spend the hour in 'catch-up' sessions feel especially disappointed not to benefit from sports and other activities attended by their classmates.
- Some of the extended day sessions seen during the inspection were dull and uninspiring. Even when a lively activity took place, for example a debate for the most able pupils, it could quite easily have been accommodated in a mainstream lesson.
- The curriculum for the first cohort of Year 10 pupils was published only recently, with little time for pupils and their parents to seek advice about options or for staff to plan together. The model proposed is narrow and it is questionable whether it will, in its current form, meet the needs and aspirations of pupils and their parents, or the published aims of the MAT.
- The school does not promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well enough. This is because there is no overview of how each subject contributes to it. From religious education (RE) lessons pupils gain some understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. They also have a sense of the importance of tolerance and respect for others, but they do not practise these values in their

everyday life around the school.

- Pupils regret that the school parliament has ceased and feel that they have little voice in the school on matters that affect them.
- In a discussion on Islam, there were good chances for pupils to reflect on links with mathematics through a focus on geometrical patterns in Islamic art, but there were missed opportunities to value and draw on the first-hand experiences and knowledge of the Muslim pupils in the class.
- Pupils had an opportunity in a tutor time observed to reflect on how they would behave during the day and become better people. Not all pupils took this opportunity seriously or with maturity, partly because they had no time to share their reflections and draw conclusions from them.
- The school provides for pupils' literacy through regular 30-minute sessions. The activities seen were the same for all pupils. Some pupils welcomed the chance for revision but others found the work too easy and their concentration lapsed.
- The school has no library and does not make use of a local library. The range of books in classrooms is neither age-appropriate nor likely to capture pupils' interests. There is, in particular, a lack of books to promote reading for information.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are sincere in their commitment to the school's improvement and have now recognised the challenges that it faces.
 - Governors were too slow to pursue the information that would have allowed them to challenge leaders at an early stage, about the quality of leadership and management of the school and pupils' progress.
 - Governors have acted, albeit slowly, to appoint a new and experienced (temporary) associate leader who understands what needs to be done to improve the school. Governors have not planned urgently a sustainable model of distributed leadership and management over the longer term with the school and MAT leaders.
 - Governors have not ensured that all the school policies are up to date, correctly signed and readily accessible to staff, and in particular to parents. This lack of diligence has led to parents not being informed of significant matters, such as changes to the school day. Information on the school's website is out of date and in some cases misleading.
 - Governors have not challenged the school rigorously enough to produce a clear and up-to-date analysis of the expenditure and impact of the pupil premium.
 - The level and effectiveness of support from the MAT for the local governing body, during a challenging period, is ineffective.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. While procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are in place, the policies for safeguarding and child protection and attendance displayed on the school's website are out of date. Pupils who the lead inspector met formally and informally said that they did not feel safe from bullying and fighting around the school and parents agree. The single central record meets requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is inadequate

- While some effective teaching was seen in lessons and in pupils' work over time, overall it is too inconsistent to secure expected or good progress for all pupils.
- There is no clear policy for providing pupils with feedback on their work. Teachers' guidance does not lead pupils to a real understanding of their next steps in learning and some teachers fail to check that pupils have finished their work and approached it with care.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is not rigorous. This has led to low expectations of pupils' outcomes and work that is unchallenging for the most able pupils. Conversely, work is too hard for other pupils. The establishment of a consistent and accurate system for assessing pupils' work reliably and tracking their progress is in its infancy.
- There is little capacity to establish the rates of progress of key groups, such as those supported by the pupil premium, the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. This has masked underachievement and prevented leaders from gaining a precise understanding of how effective teaching and learning is.
- Sometimes teachers' questioning does not probe pupils' responses and allow them to reflect more deeply on their work. Others do not prepare pupils well and build their confidence, by demonstrating what pupils need to do before expecting them to complete an activity without support. Pupils then lose interest and

resort to low-level disruption.

- The school does not promote pupils' love of literature or their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and this denotes low expectations of what pupils can learn. For example, in English, some pupils, including the most able, do not have opportunities to engage with and appreciate texts in their original forms, rather than short extracts or film clips.
- Some teaching is better than this. The inspector saw some work that demonstrated good progress over time. Pupils showed interest in their learning, for example in an RE lesson, when they noticed hexagonal shapes in Islamic art and related them to work in mathematics. In English and mathematics, pupils enjoyed lively discussions and their spontaneous questions indicated their interest.
- The good practice of some teachers is not being used effectively to raise the quality of teaching and pupils' progress across the school.
- Individual support for vulnerable pupils and those who need extra help is strong in lessons, as it is for most pupils. The wider, practical provision for the learning and emotional needs of vulnerable pupils is ineffective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare shows too little impact on their progress.
- A significant proportion of pupils do not bring positive attitudes to their learning and, especially where teaching is weak, do not develop the confidence or resilience to persevere with challenging tasks. 'It's going to be too hard', commented one pupil in a mathematics lesson, before the teacher had even begun an explanation of the task.
- Pupils who spoke with the inspector understood the various forms of bullying and some of them said that they had experienced bullying. They were not sure who to turn to when this happened.
- While most pupils said that the school building and grounds were safe, younger pupils especially said that they were worried about the behaviour of some older pupils who engaged in fighting around the school grounds. Some parents also expressed concerns about bullying.
- The school has begun to work more closely with a range of outside agencies to support pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Leaders have not provided a dedicated space for the effective support of these pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average and persistent absence is stubbornly high, especially for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- The proportion of pupils who are excluded from school, while reducing slightly, also remains too high. This is partly because the school's behaviour policy is not consistently used by all staff to manage behaviour. Pupils are aware that some pupils receive different sanctions for the same offence and perceive this as unfair.
- Some pupils are conscious of their learning being regularly disturbed by the low-level disruption caused by a small number of pupils. Where teaching was dull and unengaging, the lead inspector noted some loud calling out, but more frequently there was low-level chatter when the concentration of some pupils waned. Some pupils do not have the maturity or courtesy towards their teacher and their many classmates who enjoy learning, to manage their own behaviour appropriately.
- A significant number of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire had concerns about behaviour in the school.
- Senior leaders regularly monitor the behaviour of the very small number of pupils educated at Manchester Creative Studio for short periods of time. There are good links with the provider and procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are safe and attend regularly.
- The use of alternative provision maintains in full-time education pupils who might otherwise have disengaged from learning. The provision helps these pupils to prepare for working life.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Leaders have not ensured that information about pupils' progress is robust, transparent, accurate and reliable over time. As a result, teachers' predictions of how well pupils can achieve, the targets set and support for different groups of pupils have been inaccurate and unchallenging. Record-keeping has been lax, with test papers mislaid and scant information on pupils' starting points. This undermines any confidence that the information provides a consistent view of pupils' rates of progress overall, for particular groups and year-on-year comparisons.
- The school's response, at present, to national changes in assessment in key stage 3 is to retain previous national curriculum levels. It is clear that different departments are following a variety of different solutions and this is not conducive to a consistent, whole-school view of pupils' progress.
- Faculty leaders and teachers are not interpreting levels of progress in similar ways, so that the information given to pupils and parents is confusing. This was evident in books scrutinised during the inspection, where levels given did not match the pupils' achievement or the content of the lesson.
- Pupils' rates of progress are highly dependent on who is teaching them. Some staff are embracing new, more demanding ways of teaching and learning that push the progress of the most able pupils. Other teachers limit pupils' progress by not giving them the space to formulate and exchange their ideas.
- The expectations of pupils' standards of grammar, punctuation, style and presentation are often too low. Too often teachers set the same work for all pupils, regardless of their starting points, and this slows their progress, especially in the case of the most able pupils.
- Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not a strong enough preparation for the next phase of their education in key stage 4. In particular, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise extended speaking and justify their views and opinions.
- Like the assessment of progress for all pupils, the tracking of progress for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is weak. The absence of precise tracking information for current Year 9 pupils means that leaders cannot predict accurately how well this group will achieve when they move on to Year 10.

School details

Unique reference number	139970
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10011707

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–12 May 2016
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alun Morgan
Associate headteacher	Mark McLoughlin
Telephone number	0161 681 1488
Website	http://collectivespirit@org.uk
Email address	info@collectivespirit.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Collective Spirit Free School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school for boys and girls.
- The school opened as a free school in September 2013. Together with Manchester Creative Studio, it is part of the Collective Spirit Multi-Academy Trust.
- Significantly more boys than girls attend the school.
- Currently only pupils in Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 attend the school. There is therefore no published national information concerning their attainment and progress. Key stage 4 courses will open from September 2016.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for funding through the pupil premium is well above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is similar to the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, but the proportion of pupils who come from other backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is rising.
- The school's website does not meet requirements because a number of policies, for example for safeguarding and child protection, are out of date. The information on the expenditure and impact of pupil premium funding is also unclear.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the associate headteacher, the vice-principal and middle leaders.
- Discussions were also held with 18 pupils representing Years 7 to 9, four governors, including the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the trust and a headteacher from an outstanding school, who is supporting the school.
- Further discussions were held with 10 parents by telephone.
- The inspector looked at the quality of teaching and learning in lessons taught, spoke with pupils about their work and considered work completed over time in pupils' books. The associate headteacher accompanied the lead inspector on four short visits to English, mathematics and science classes.
- The inspector made visits to a registration session to see pupils' morning reflection time. She also observed pupils arriving at school and their behaviour around the school.
- The inspector also checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and took account of 18 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Some surveys of parental satisfaction from 2014–2015, presented by the trust, were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Susan Wareing, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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